

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A rolling bearing cleaning method for cleaning a bearing by using a cleaning liquid, the rolling bearing including an inner ring, an outer ring, rolling elements and a retainer, comprising steps of:

immersing the rolling bearing in the cleaning liquid, which is disposed in a cleaning vessel;

fixing one of the outer ring and the inner ring, and disposing the other ring so as to be free to rotate while disposing the rolling bearing to be cleaned near a surface of the cleaning liquid;

~~flowing the cleaning liquid onto the rolling elements; and~~

~~rotating the rotatable ring;~~

~~wherein the~~ flowing of the cleaning liquid is such that cleaning liquid flows through the rolling bearing from the axial direction of the rolling bearing into spaces existing between raceway surfaces of the inner and outer rings and surrounding the rolling elements and the retainer;

cleaning the rolling bearing by flowing the cleaning liquid through an inner portion of the rolling bearing without rotating the same; and

cleaning the rolling bearing by flowing the cleaning liquid through an inner portion of the rolling bearing while rotating the same, via the fluid, after execution of the non-rotation cleaning step.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a step of:

cleaning the rolling bearing in combination with an ultrasonic cleaning.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the flowing of the cleaning liquid is performed by jetting with high pressure.

7-12. (Canceled)

13. (Withdrawn) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said step of immersing further comprises immersing a plurality of rolling bearings which are superposed on one another.

14. (Withdrawn) A rolling bearing cleaning method for cleaning a bearing by using a cleaning liquid, the rolling bearing including an inner ring, an outer ring, rolling elements and a retainer, comprising steps of:

immersing the rolling bearing in the cleaning liquid, which is disposed in a cleaning vessel;

fixing one of the outer ring and the inner ring, and disposing the other ring so as to be free to rotate;

flowing the cleaning liquid onto the rolling elements; and

applying a pre-load to the rolling bearing in an axial direction to thereby rotate the rolling bearing in such a manner that rotation speed of the inner ring, retainer and rolling element are different from each other;

wherein the flowing of the cleaning liquid is such that cleaning liquid flows through the rolling bearing from an axial direction of the rolling bearing into spaces existing between raceway surfaces of the inner and outer rings and surrounding the rolling elements and the retainer.

15. (Withdrawn). A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 14, further comprising a step of:

cleaning the rolling bearing in combination with an ultrasonic cleaning.

16. (Withdrawn) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 14, wherein the flowing of the cleaning liquid is performed by jetting with high pressure.

17. (Withdrawn) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 14, further comprising steps of:

cleaning the rolling bearing by flowing the cleaning liquid through an inner portion of the rolling bearing without rotating the same; and

cleaning the rolling bearing by flowing the cleaning liquid through an inner portion of the rolling bearing while rotating the same, after execution of the non-rotation cleaning step.

18. (Withdrawn) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 17, wherein the non-rotating cleaning step is executed in combination with an ultrasonic cleaning.

19. (Withdrawn) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 14, wherein said step of immersing further comprises immersing a plurality of rolling bearings which are superposed on one another.

20. (New) A rolling bearing cleaning method as set forth in claim 6, wherein the jetting with high pressure is performed by causing the fluid to flow through a channel that narrows in cross sectional area.